

60-Second SoTL

Episode 14 – Mentoring Undergraduate Research in Global Contexts

(Piano Music)

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Jessie L. Moore:

How are mentors supporting learning and development when they mentor undergraduate research in global contexts? That's the focus of this week's **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. I'm Jessie Moore.

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In "Mentoring Undergraduate Research in Global Contexts: Insights From a National Study," published in the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, Laura Cruz, Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, Amy L. Allocco, and Kate Patch share results from a national survey of faculty, staff, and study abroad practitioners. They note that extensive research has explored the benefits for students of participating in mentored undergraduate research and in global education as discrete activities, but few studies have examined the combined effects of mentored undergraduate research in global contexts.

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Their survey addresses that gap as part of a two-year partnership among the American Association of Colleges & Universities, the Forum on Education Abroad, and Elon University's Center for Research on Global Engagement. Cruz, Vandermaas-Peeler, Allocco, and Patch distributed a 23-item survey via convenience and snowball sampling to professional listservs, social media, and the sponsoring organizations' email lists in September and October 2021.

144 faculty, staff, and administrators responded to the survey, with 40 to 43 of those participants answering each of three open-ended questions about strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities related to mentored undergraduate research in global contexts. This subset of responses represented tenured or tenure line faculty, non-tenure-line faculty, and professional or administrative staff from a range of institution types and disciplines.

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The researchers used emergent coding and constant comparison to develop a shared code book to analyze 178 segments related to mentoring practices. They note that their results align with prior research on mentored undergraduate research but also highlight distinct challenges and opportunities related to cultural contexts.

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Participants referenced psychosocial, instrumental, and – less frequently – relational mentoring practices. Mentors’ psychosocial mentoring practices focused on developing interpersonal relationships, establishing personal connections in support of students’ learning, and attending to students’ developing worldview.

Staff participants were less likely than faculty to discuss instrumental mentoring practices like project-oriented skill development, and most of these practices focused on outcomes of undergraduate research. While a few participants noted instrumental outcomes related to global learning, none of these responses came from STEM disciplines.

Finally, relational mentoring practices were mentioned less frequently and often referenced community-based approaches to mentoring. In this case, respondents with STEM backgrounds were more likely to reference building internal communities like project teams, peer mentoring networks, and mentoring constellations.

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Based on these findings, the researchers advocate for professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators involved in mentored undergraduate research in global contexts so that mentors are better prepared to integrate psychosocial, instrumental, and relational mentoring practices in this intersectional learning context.

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To learn more about this study, follow the link in our show notes to read this article and to review our supplemental resources for this episode.

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(Piano Music)

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Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University’s Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

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